DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 021 925 UD 006 132

By- Myers, Albert E.

FACTORS RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF NEGRO CHILDREN IN A BUSSING INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Pub Date 68

Note- 21p.; Paper based on a talk given at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association (1968).

EDRS Price MF- $0.25 HC- $0.92

Descriptors- ADMINISTRATOR ATTITUDES, *BUS TRANSPORTATION, COMMUNITY ATTITUDES, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, *INTEGRATION EFFECTS, NEGATIVE ATTITUDES, NEGRO ATTITUDES, *NEGRO STUDENTS, PRINCIPALS, PROGRAM EVALUATION, RACIAL COMPOSITION, RESEARCH PROJECTS, *SCHOOL INTEGRATION, SELF ESTEEM, STUDENT ATTITUDES

Presenting highlights of several projects, this paper reports on research which assessed the total reaction of a community to a busing program. The program is analyzed as an educational innovation rather than as a school integration method. The plan involved transporting volunteer Negro children in overcrowded schools to white underutilized schools. It is concluded that sensitivity is needed in each busing situation, which should be preceded by much planning and "in-house" education. Also, programs for Negroes should be supported and initiated by them. There should be flexibility about the percentage of nonlocal children bused into a school, depending upon what kind of school "image" is desired. The principal is probably the most vital force in implementing such a program, and if he is antagonistic, he should be either replaced or there should be no program in his school. Moreover, educational programs should help the Negro to achieve his own social and intellectual goals. (NH)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

06132

Factors Relating to the Acceptance of Negro Children in a Bussing Integration Program[1]

Albert E. Myers

University of Delaware

Integration is both a social movement and an educational innovation. Since the 1954 Supreme Court decision declared segregationist laws unconstitutional, there have been large numbers of people who have tried to persuade school systems to implement a plan for integration. When a plan is introduced, it becomes a problem of school personnel to make it work.

The most frequently used plan to create integrated schools in segregated neighborhoods has been bussing. In most instances Negroes have been bussed to white schools; although in a few cases the reverse has been true also. Although there are still some cities which are trying to initiate bussing programs (e.g., Chicago) the integrationist movement has for the most part lost its steam. Black leadership has continually emphasized black nationalism and even separatism in the last year or two.

---

[1]Based on a talk given at the 1968 meeting of the American Educational Research Association.

UD 006 132
ED021925

As a result, this analysis of a bussing program should be viewed as an evaluation of an educational innovation. It is quite likely that this particular innovation will not be as frequently used as we probably thought it would be a few years ago. There will undoubtedly be several communities in the coming years where the particular circumstances of those communities are appropriate for this particular innovation. The findings of this study therefore may be useful in understanding the Negro movement, the implementation of educational innovations in general, and the specific introduction of a bussing program for integration.

The integration movement generated two major questions; first, did the target Negroes improve and second, did the target whites deteriorate. Most of the public venom that was directed towards such programs focussed on the accusation that a bussing program would be harmful to the white students. Parents who hold this belief are understandably quite upset with the possibility of their child being in such a program. Recent data from several cities which have been reported in the popular press indicate that Negroes do tend to improve and the whites tend to stay the same. That is, as far as the achievement test are concerned the results are favorable to integration.

This paper is not concerned with the global question "did it work." Asking global questions can only lead to confusion. There is no way to resolve conflicting findings. Witness, for example, the morass of confusion which exists on the question of homogeneous versus heterogeneous grouping. In order to encourage inquiry which would avoid that type of problem, this study will deal with the isolation of those factors which lead to favorable or unfavorable school situations and with the impact of those situations on the children.

Research Orientation

This paper provides the highlights of several research projects covering a period of over a year. A large part of the research effort was oriented towards the use of standard research techniques (e.g., testing, interviewing). In addition, however, considerable information was gathered through non-standardized, unquantified techniques. To a large extent, the problem was approached with the view of the cultural anthropologist. The task was to learn how the culture (in this case, the community) worked. As a result, I sat as an observer in all the classrooms, spoke with each teacher at least once and had several discussions with each

principal. I attended virtually every public meeting in the city that dealt with the topic. I paid particular attention to every rumor I heard and frequently spent large portions of time trying to assess the accuracy of these rumors. In short, I tried to learn everything I could about the community's reaction to this program. In many instances I felt like a detective in that I was concerned with tracing the implications of clues I found. The purpose was not to replace the quantitative procedures which were available but to augment them. These anthropoligical procedures were vital in evaluating the program.

The basic research goal was first to discover what forces existed in each neighborhood and school; second, which of these forces seemed to be relevant to whether or not the school generated a favorable climate for the program; and third, what were the consequences of favorable and unfavorable situations.

There is a mild circularity in this approach. Favorable situations are those which produce favorable consequences. It is not as though situations were being evaluated independently of consequences. In deciding which schools provided good situations, we will indeed "peek" at

the consequences. In the end, we will have to decide if there was enough information to make an independent judgment and finally, if the total package of situations and consequences makes sense.

The sample.

The sample was composed of approximately 240 5th and 6th grade pupils who were bussed from predominately Negro schools to predominately white schools. Students were recruited for the program by the staffs in the Negro schools. They discussed with the parents the advantages of bussing their children to less crowded schools. The basic theme used in persuasion was that the schools were overcrowded, not that they were segregated. It is quite important to note that the parents did not volunteer on the basis of integration. The black community at this time was apathetic to integration. The entire program was initiated and maintained by white people, although there were certain black leaders who participated.

Similar attempts were made to initiate an open enrollment program in another part of town which contained several elementary schools. These schools serviced low income areas and were mostly integrated, i.e., with a 20-50% Negro

population. Once again parents were given the opportunity to have their children moved out of overcrowded schools into less crowded ones. In each case, however, the receiving school was of roughly the same socio-economic status as the sending school. There were not enough volunteers to initiate the program in this part of the city. This result virtually demonstrates that the mothers who did volunteer their child's participation were reacting to the opportunity to send their child to a higher socio-economic level rather than the opportunity to send the child to a less crowded school or an integrated school. <u>The sampling procedure indicates therefore that we are dealing with social class integration rather than racial integration</u>, even though all but a few of the students who were being bussed were Negro.

<u>The non-sample</u>.

It may be worthwhile to emphasize who was <u>not</u> in the sample. The non-sample included

1. Those Negro children whose parents chose not to have their child bussed.
2. Those Negro children whose parents were never contacted and, therefore, never had an opportunity to be bussed.
3. Those Negro and white children in the other

part of town whose parents chose not to have their children bussed.

4. The junior high pupils who were involved in a <u>compulsory</u> bussing program which was begun at the same time.

The compulsory program mentioned last was the cause of considerable hostility. It tended to confuse issues. Many parents and even teachers did not realize that the elementary program was voluntary. As a result there was unnecessary resentment towards it. Since "open enrollment" (i.e., voluntary bussing) generally does not breed much anger, this program may be viewed in the light of being compulsory even though it technically was not.

Results

Table 1 provides summary data on some of the forces which effected the atmosphere in the school. Of the seven variables listed, four are verifiable on objective grounds while the other three were more judgmental.

<u>Attitude in receiving neighborhood</u>.

It is a common result to find that persons with more education and high income have more tolerant attitudes towards minority groups. The only two areas in the city where substantial support for the bussing program was found were

the wealthiest. In each area approximately 50% of the people were in favor of the program while the remaining 50% were vehemently opposed to it. Having as many as half the people in the neighborhoods supporting the program is regarded as positive support.

The remaining three neighborhoods varied widely in their socio-economic status. School V was composed primarily of poor whites and a small (less than 10%) percentage of Negroes. It was the only white area in the city with public housing and a discernable welfare rate. School X was very much the same except that the average income was a little higher. The neighborhood was deteriorating but it was still filled with employed families with private ownership of inexpensive (and old) homes. School Z was in a well-established middle class Italian neighborhood. The parents in X's district were primarily indifferent and apathetic. The parents in the V and Z district were extremely antagonistic to the program.

V and Z represented lower and lower middle class Italian catholic neighborhoods. The attitude of the parents there was almost invariant. Many of the responses to the interviews were blatantly racist. It seems quite likely

that the antagonism towards Negroes was a direct by-product of the Italian catholic subculture in this community. Although catholics tend to emerge in an unfavorable light from studies of authoritarianism and prejudice, (Brown, 1965). It seems quite unlikely that such a tendency could produce the uniformity found here. It is quite impossible to tell whether Italian catholic neighborhoods will typically be as unsympathetic with Negro problems. It is incontestable that they formed the backbone of reaction in the present situation.

Attitude of the principal.

The attitude of a principal is a very sensitive area in educational research. The public criticism of a principal will almost inevitably generate strong controversy. As a result this highly critical issue is a very difficult one to study objectively. We are forced to rely on innuendo and conversational tone and sometimes even rumors if we are to include the principal's attitude as a variable in the study.

All five of the principals were against the bussing program. In general they did not think it was an appropriate answer to the problem of racial inbalance. Two of the principals however (at W and X) felt that the Board of Education had the right to make this decision even though

the principals disagreed with it. They also felt however that it was their responsibility to make a success of the program.

Two of the other principals (at V and X) on the other hand were more than simply unsympathetic. They actively undermined the program. They consistently complained about the activities of the Board of Education, spoke derogatively of the Negro children and were highly nurturant of teachers who expressed dissatisfaction.

Both principals were regarded by large numbers of the administrative personnel and parents to be incompetent. The view was uniformly held by liberals. In response to the pressure of the influential parents at Y, the principal was transferred to another school at the end of the year. Symptomatic of the tragic state of urban education, she was told by her superiors (the superintendent and the Board of Education) that she was being given a difficult assignment because of the <u>good</u> job she had done. The deception was employed because the Board of Education did not want to exacerbate the tense schism that existed between the principals and the central staff.

The program was so obviously unsatisfactory at V that

it was terminated after one year to everyone's relief. It is an interesting psychological note that by and large, the mothers of children bussed to V did not remember volunteering. They had conveniently managed to forget that they were partially responsible for the bad situation in that they volunteered to have their children go in the first place.

The nature of the lunchtime rules give some indication of how a principal's attitude can influence the atmosphere. Since the Negro children were bussed out of their neighborhood it was not possible for them to walk home for lunch. At the beginning of the program they were bussed back to their own neighborhood at lunchtime. This proved quite unsatisfactory and a cold lunch program was initiated in the school. The rules of conduct for these programs were quite diverse. Negro children at School W were frequently invited to the homes of the white students for lunch. An invited student would simply tell the teacher that he had received the invitation and therefore would be absent during the lunch hour.

The principals at Schools V and Z chose to interpret their responsibilities to mean that they were personally

responsible for the students during the entire lunch hour. The students at School V were restricted to the playground area while those at School Z were required to stay inside a basement room throughout the entire lunch period and were not even allowed to play in the school yard in nice weather. Any invitation to lunch had to be preceded by a letter from the inviting mother which made it clear that she assumed responsibility for the child. This policy of course precluded any spontaneous offering of invitations by the white pupils themselves. Invitations to lunch were rare at V, X, and Z and reasonably frequent at W and Y.

Some consequences.

Perhaps the most direct evaluation of the impact of the bussing program on the Negroes was their willingness to continue with it. It was quite clear from the data in Table 2 that the integration program was a failure at School V and and a success at School W. This should not be too surprising in light of the previous discussion.

It is impressive to see how favorably School X was viewed. Both the mothers and children were in favor of returning to the school and the mothers' ratings of satisfaction were quite high. In fact, it was only in Schools W

and X that the reaction of the Negro mothers and students was unquestionably favorable.

Most Americans would probably prefer to have their own children go to Y rather than X. The latter is in a deteriorating, transitional neighborhood while the neighborhood surrounding the former is lovely. Although both buildings were quite old School X had a decidedly inferior physical plant. Why then did the Negroes react more favorably to X than to Y? There is only one variable in which X had a more positive score than Y; the attitude of the principal. Significantly enough, the only other school principal rated positively was at W. These data suggest that the attitude of the principal may be the most significant single force to effect the desirability of the school for Negroes. It may indicate that Negro children are much more interested in how they are treated than they are in the affluence of their surroundings. Seventy-five per cent of the Negro children wanted to continue in X while 44% wanted to continue at Y. Notice, however, that the mothers made no such distinction. There was no difference between the percentage of mothers who wanted their children to return to X and the percentage who wanted their children to return to Y.

There was a difference, however, in the ratings of satisfaction. The mothers gave higher ratings of satisfaction to X than they did to Y. This suggests that although the mothers recognized some of the difficulties exisiting at Y, the quality of the neighborhood was still attractive enough to warrant their continued interest. It is an interesting sociological note that the parents were presumably affected by the affluence of the neighborhood while the children were not. The parents reacted more to status while the children reacted more to treatment.

Self-Esteem and Dependency

The Self Symbol Social Task is a set of non-verbal tasks which are designed to measure various aspects of self-concept. Two of the tests have been shown by Long (1968) and Harootunian (1968) to be affected in newly integrated situations. These were the sub-test dealing with self-esteem and dependency. The data in Table 2 show that these variables seem to be related to the favorability of the school atmosphere. In both cases higher scores were found at Schools W and X and these scores were significantly different from those in Schools V and Z.

To the extent that these tests are valid the data would indicate the Negro children in favorable situations were more socially integrated (higher social dependence) and had less self-esteem. Needless to say, it seems strange to conclude that the favorable situations generate lower self-esteem. When we remember that the children wanted to return to these schools, that interpretation becomes untenable.

I would like to suggest that the pupils in the favorable situations became less defensive. They were able to deal with their academic and social-status inferiority with less defensiveness and anxiety when they were accepted in the white school. When the school environment was hostile, they defensively described themselves as having higher self-esteem.

The fact that all the pupils at W wanted to return demonstrates that their social adjustment was more important to the children themselves than any comparison of academic records. There is a common accusation that Negro children do not want to be in situations where they cannot compete with superior students that is a myth! It should be discarded. Perhaps the exciting alternative is that the Negro children reacted positively to circumstances which helped

them develop better self-adjustment.

Achievement Scores

The analyses of achievement test scores were highly ambiguous. Numerous comparisons were made between the white and Negro pupils at these achools and pupils at other comparison schools. Except for the finding that the Negro children who participated in the program were entirely representative of the schools from which they came, no uniformly defensible conclusions could be drawn.

Discussion

I came to many conclusions in the course of doing the study; only some of these conclusions are represented by the data that have been presented in this paper. The data documented a point which is obvious, but which for a variety of reasons is never appropriately considered. Namely, some integrating situations are very desirable and others are not. Furthermore, desirable integrating situations have positive consequences for Negro children while undesirable situations do not. These points, obvious as they may be, have been typically overlooked both in the popular and scientific press.

An integrating situation does more than simply put black and white school children together. It becomes a community program which involves both educators and laymen. It also involves the entire political structure of the community. Educational researchers may focus on the educational innovation that is involved, but the community is going to focus on the social change that the political act of integration represents. In those instances where there is community involvement, it seems imperative that the researcher include those community forces in his analysis. I have become very impressed with how valuable anthropoligical techniques are in studying an educational problem and would like to see them used more broadly by rigorous researchers.

Finally, I would like to offer the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. We should be sensitive to the qualities of the situation which exists. Integration will be more successful in some circumstances than in others.

2. Programs for integration should not be initiated without considerable planning and in-house education.

3. Programs for the Negro should be supported and preferably initiated by the Negro. This includes plans for inte-

integration and metropolitan planning.

4. If it is considered desirable <u>not</u> to change the "image" of the school, no more than 20% of a non-local population should be introduced. Some criteria make it desirable to have no change in "image;" other criteria might favor a change.

5. The principal is a vital force; perhaps the most vital force in the implementation of an educational program. It makes no sense to begin a program that will be subsequently sabotaged from within. If a principal is antagonistic, either get a new principal or don't begin the program.

6. In creating educational programs we should beware of satisfying the needs of liberal whites in lieu of satisfying the needs of the Negroes. All too often, programs are developed in order to help Negroes become as white people would like them. Educators must begin to allow education help the Negro to achieve the social and intellectual goals that Negroes have.

Table I

Forces which affect the atmosphere <u>atmosphere in the school</u>	V	W	X	Y	Z
Attitude in receiving neighborhood[a]	–	+	0	+	–
Academic ability of receiving neighborhood[b]	–	+	0	+	+
Socioeconomic status of receiving neighborhood[c]	–	+	0	+	+
Attitude of principal[d]	–	+	+	–	0
Distance bussed[e]	–	–	+	+	–
Number of children bussed[f]	–	+	–	–	+
Lunchtime rules[g]	–	+	+	+	–

a Based primarily on interviews with parents from the neighborhood.

b Based on achievement test scores.

c This is entirely obvious by driving through the neighborhoods, but it is substantiated by average income in census tracts.

d My judgment, based upon all available information about the principal as well as numerous discussions with each principal.

e A relative measure based upon the time spent on the bus from pickup in home neighborhood to delivery at school. The time varied from 5 minutes at X to 30 minutes at V and Z.

f. My judgment, not based on the actual number of children bussed so much as it is on the percentage of Negroes in the classroom after bussing. Thus, Z and W had roughly 20% of a classroom with 67% bussed-in children.

g. My judgment. It reflects the degree to which the lunch time rules facilitated social integration.

Table II: Some Consequences

	V	W	X	Y	Z
Negro mothers' ratings of satisfaction	1.72	2.75	2.75	2.00	1.58
% Children wanting to continue	4	100	75	44	25
% Mothers wanting to continue	0	85	68	62	50
Social Symbols Task-Mean Self Esteem	2.95	5.02	4.76	4.00	3.59
Social Symbols Task-Mean Social Dependency	.01	.39	.33	.19	.08

Bibliography

Harootunian, Berj. Self-Other Relationships of Segregated and Desegregated Ninth Graders, 1968, Amer. Educ. Research Assoc. Convention, Chicago.

Long, Barbara H. The Self Concept of Negro and White School Beginners, 1968, Amer. Educ. Research Assoc. Convention, Chicago.

Brown, Roger. Social Psychology, 1965, Free Press, New York.